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Diana T Fritz 08/26/2006 04:58:28 PM From DB/Inbox: Search Results

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ACTION: PAO  
INFO: DCM ECON POL AMB

DISSEMINATION: PAO  
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RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON 1048  
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SIPDIS

STATE FOR NEA/ARP; NEA/PPD; NEA/RA; INR/R/MR; PA; INR/NESA; INR/B;  
RRU-NEA  
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White House for Press Office; NSC  
SECDEF FOR OASD/PA  
USCINCCENT FOR POLAD  
LONDON FOR MCKUNE

E.O. 12958: N/A  
tags: oip, kmdr, tc  
SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION: RAPE AND KILLING OF IRAQI GIRL

¶1. Summary: A columnist in "Akhbar Al Arab" strongly attacked the US occupation of Iraq after the rape and killing of an Iraqi girl by a US soldier and suggested that this kind of incident will last forever in Iraq's memory. Gulf News published an editorial commenting on a poll which suggests that the Bush Administration is responsible for the deterioration of world peace. End Summary

¶2. Under headline "Occupation's hideousness and Iraqis' memory", Abu Dhabi-based Pan-Arab daily "Akhbar Al-Arab" (circulation 20,000) wrote 07/05 unsigned editorial:

".... The US occupation of Iraq continued its hideous journey in history and added more painful pages full of blood and tears in an era that is known as the human rights age. The occupation forces violated human rights in Abu Ghraib and did not apologize, but rather continued killings, rapes, burning bodies and so on. The most recent one is the killing of an Iraqi family and raping the Iraqi girl. This incident was revealed by the U.S. media after months of official cover-up... But will the Iraqis remain silence on such crimes? ... What will remain in the Iraqis' memory is not the fall of Saddam's statue, but rather those images of Abu Ghraib abuses, and the rape of the Iraqi girl. The family of the girl wanted to hide this crime because of the shame associated with it but the U.S. media disclosed the scandal and the criminals.

¶3. Under the headline "Americans are fine, not White House",

Dubai-based English Language daily "Gulf News" (circulation 95,000) wrote 07/05 editorial:

"It was always going to be difficult being the world's sole superpower. Criticized if you do intervene, criticized if you take an isolationist course. But the YouGov/Gulf News survey shows America's global standing has diminished under the present administration to an alarming extent. A massive 70 per cent believed that the policies of this White House had made the world a worse place to live in. This, it must be emphasized, was not knee-jerk anti-Americanism. A substantial majority believed that American culture made the world a more pleasurable place to live in or at least did not have a detrimental effect. This survey reveals that the respondents were mature enough to acknowledge that on an individual level they liked Americans but the policies of the White House they abhorred. No other country has such an ethnic representation between its borders and no other country has championed the dignity of man as much. It may have fallen short of its high standards but it was brave enough to set them in the first place. Its independence day recognizes the achievement of men who stood up to an autocratic and distant (both geographically and politically) government. It is ironic that the poll reveals that today many consider Washington behaves in an autocratic manner. Certainly Guantanamo, Abu Ghraib, secret detention centers, have dented America's image. This would be worrisome to any administration at any time but it is a major concern during a time when Washington is engaged in its "war on terror". This war will be won not on a battlefield but in the political arena. For this campaign, international goodwill is even more important than smart bombs or spy satellites. If America's image is compromised, then what it stands for is compromised."

Sison